THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (c) Apart from the Special Scheme for allotment of retail outlet (petrol pump) dealerships and LPG distributorships to the widows/next of kin of Defence personnel killed in action in 'OP Vijay' (Kargil) and under the scheme of discretionary quota of the Government for allotment of dealerships/distributorships to certain categories of people on genuine compassionate grounds and in deserving cases, retail outlet dealerships for different locations in the country, including those in the State of Assam, are set up by the oil marketing companies after selection of dealers through a laid down process and out of the Marketing Plans of the Oil Industry for such dealerships. There is no co-relation between the Five Year Plans and the Marketing Plans of the Oil Industry. After the dismentling of the Administered Pricing Mechanism in the petroleum sector with effect from 1.4.2002, the job of selection of dealers/ distributors of petroleum products will be undertaken by the oil marketing companies themselves. In view of above and also in view of the fact that the process of allotment has to undergo a number of stages like selection of dealers as per policy guidelines, various approvals, etc., it may not be possible to indicate the time frame by which new retail outlet dealerships are likely to be allotted in the State of Assam.

Removal of LPG from taxation ambit

2046. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry has sent a proposal to remove LPG outside the ambit of taxation by States to the Union Government.

(b) whether the Ministry has any plan to declare LNG in the list of 'declared goods' so as to achieve its objective;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when, the LNG policy is going to be brought before Parliament for its approval?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) There is a large gap between demand and supply of natural gas. In order to meet the demand of natural gas one of the options is import of natural gas in the form of Liquified Natural Gas (LNG). to attract the investment in LNG sector and to make LNG available at reasonable prices to customers, particularly Power and Fertilizer Sectors, LNG has been placed under Open General License (OGL) list with permission for 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and allowed the benefit of concessional customs duty on import of capital goods on case to case basis.

Government is formulating an LNG policy which may, *inter-alia*, include fiscal concessions like status of 'declared goods' for sales tax purposes etc.

Enquiry into allotment of petrol pumps

2047. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHERJEE:
SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU):

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any independent inquiries, through CBI or otherwise have since been made in the light of revelations in press about the irregularities, favouritism and nepotism that came into play in the matter of allotment of petrol pumps and LP Gas dealership during 1999-2000 onwards;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the outcome and findings thereof; and

(d) the action taken against those found responsible for the irregularities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (d) No, Sir. In consideration of the controversy that arose in July—August, 2002 through media reports and which was also raised in the Parliament during its Monsoon Session, 2002, regarding allotment of dealerships/distributorships of petroleum products to certain categories of people, the Government decided, in order to ensure fair play in action and in public interest, to cancel all allotments of retail outlet dealerships